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ABSTRACT

Two trends will impact the academic labor force through the rest of this century: approximately half of the existing professorial positions are held by persons within 15 years of retirement, and demographic projections are that by the year 2000, ethnic minority groups will constitute 30% of the national population. Underrepresented minority students may not be able to take full advantage of this favorable climate due to their continuing underrepresentation among annual Ph.D. recipients. Between 1980 and 1984, overall minority school enrollment declined 8.5%. In 1984, underrepresented minority students received only 5.5% of the Ph.D.'s awarded and were concentrated in education, social sciences, humanities and life sciences. If this situation is to be rectified, universities with degree-granting programs must play a large role in the identification, enrollment and preparation of minority graduate students. Seven steps for improving identification of minority graduate students are presented, including the increased involvement of minority undergraduates in university activities and the development of recruitment activities and materials targeted to minority students. Four steps for improving minority student admission procedures are presented, including the inclusion of minorities on the admissions committee and increased use of assistantships. Four steps are presented for increasing minority participation in academic life and thus enhancing their desire to choose college/university teaching as a career. These include more involvement with faculty members and in departmental activities and providing more opportunities for teaching/research assistantships and for presentation and publication of the work of minority students. The necessity for recruiting and developing minority faculty is also discussed. (KM)

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TOMORROW'S PROFESSORATE: INSURING MINORITY PARTICIPATION THROUGH TALENT DEVELOPMENT TODAY

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"The potential for ethnic minority students to find opportunity and advancement in the academic arena during the remainder of this century might be greater than at anytime in the history of this Nation," is the way Dr. Percy A. Pierre, President of Prairie View A&M University described the current postsecondary faculty hiring outlook.

Dr. Pierre made his comment based on two trends that will impact the academic labor force through the remainder of this century. First, of the more than 600,000 college and university professorial positions that now exist, approximately one-half (50%) are held by persons within 15 years of retirement. Secondly, demographers (Hodgkinson, Vetter and others) project that by the year 2000, ethnic minority group share of the total population will increase from the present level of 21 percent to 30 percent nationwide and as much as 40 percent in some states.

The first of these trends will create an unprecedented number of faculty positions; while the second will reduce the pool of traditional talent (70% white male--Change Magazine, 1985) available for consideration as candidates for faculty appointments.

Most observers fear that underrepresented minority students (American Indians, Black Americans, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans) will not be able to take full advantage of this favorable climate due to their continuing underrepresentation among annual Ph.D. recipients--the Ph.D. being a major prerequisite for consideration to professorial appointments.

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A review of statistics on minority graduate school participation rates substantiates these fears. For example, between 1980 and 1984, the Department of Education's Center for Statistics reported that overall minority graduate school enrollment declined 8.5 percent--the decline was 11.9 percent for Blacks and 6.4 percent for American Indians. Hispanics had a slight gain for the period of 0.5 percent (Table I).

TABLE I

GRADUATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT CHANGES BETWEEN 1980 AND 1984

	1980 NUMBER	%	1984 NUMBER	%	CHANGE
AMERCIAN INDIAN	3,882	0.4	3,634	0.4	- 6.4
BLACKS	59,993	6.1	52,834	5.5	-11.9
HISPANICS	24,263	2.5	24,402	2.5	0.5
WHITES	898,698	9.1	882,253	91.6	- 1.4
TOTALS	986,836	100.0	963,123	100.0	

SOURCE: ACE Minorities in Higher Education 1986 Report.

On the degree receiving end for 1984, of 31,253 total Ph.D.'s awarded in the United States, underrepresented minority students received only 1,727 or 5.5 percent--American Indians 73 (0.2%); Blacks 1,049 (3.4%); and Hispanics 605 (1.9%).

What these data don't show is that the '84 minority Ph.D. recipients tended to be mostly concentrated in education, the social sciences, humanities and the life sciences, and sparsely concentrated in engineering and the physical sciences (Table II).

TABLE II

MINORITY DOCTORATE RECIPIENTS, 1984

	American Indian	Black	Hispanic
Education	41.9%	52.3%	32.2%
Engineering	1.1%	2.1%	2.9%
Humanities	8.6%	7.3%	17.2%
Life Sciences	19.4%	7.7%	13.4%
Physical Sciences	4.3%	3.3%	7.5%
Professional	6.5%	8.1%	5.2%
Social Sciences	18.3%	19.1%	21.6%

SOURCE: National Research Council, 1986

To be sure there is not an oversupply of minority talent in any area, including education which accounted for 41.6 percent of the '84 Ph.D. recipients. However, concern must be raised about the serious lack of presence of minority Ph.D. recipients in disciplines such as engineering (1.5%), mathematics (2.3%), computer sciences (2.0%), and the physical sciences (2.6%).

WHERE TO START

Since the Ph.D. is primary among credentials considered for faculty appointments, and since the grantors of doctorates are graduate schools, we should start with the universities. This might appear simplistic. Surprisingly, however, universities have not been in the forefront on this issue. In fact, with few exceptions--Ohio State University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Florida, University of California, Berkeley--most institutions have offered only excuses (Adams, 1985).

If this situation is to be rectified, universities with doctoral granting programs must play a large role in the identification, enrollment and preparation of minority

graduate students.

Identification - Identifying quality undergraduate minority students early and channelling them into experiences that offer exposure to the academic life of a professor is the best way to increase the pool of potential graduate school applicants. Thus, close involvement with the faculty is imperative. This can be done by involving minority undergraduate students in seminars, colloquiums, honors programs and research projects.

One way to more fully immerse minority students into the life of the department is to have some of the bright juniors and seniors serve as tutors or lab proctors.

Because information is critical to the choices available to students, professors can share with minority students: (1) their own experiences with regard to graduate work; (2) announcements about graduate study opportunities sent by colleagues and associates; and (3) can assist students in making an honest assessment of their potential for graduate work.

Summary of action steps to take to improve identification of minority graduate students:

* Engage undergraduate minority students more fully in the life of the department/university by: (1) assigning them to committees; (2) encouraging them to attend seminars/meetings; and (3) encouraging participation on group or team projects.
* Have promising minority undergraduates serve as research assistants to faculty members to immerse them in the rigor of scholarly work.
* Sponsorship of open houses and career days to invite prospective minority students to the campus.
* Develop informational materials related to campus life, graduate financial aid, and the academic program which gives a minority student's point of view--let the students see themselves in the picture.
* Involve current minority students and faculty in recruitment and orientation

activities and utilize them as resources.

* Develop ties with undergraduate institutions that have large minority enrollments.
* Become a part of community, state, and national programs that offer linkage to pools of minority students seeking graduate study opportunities.

Admission - Admission to graduate school is, for the most part, discipline based and thus, controlled at the departmental level. More importantly, almost all assistantships--teaching assistants (TA's) and research assistants (RA's)--are departmentally controlled. And since TA's and RA's represent both the major source of graduate student support and the major outlet for gaining the training needed to enter the professional ranks, departmental admission decisions on assistantships serve as the filter through which one must pass to enter the apprenticeship program of the academy.

Departments must, therefore, structure their admission policies to guard against the negative impact these policies may have on the enrollment of minority students.

Summary of action steps to take to improve minority student admission procedures:

* Include wherever possible, minority faculty and students in the makeup of the admissions committee.
* Consider both quantitative and qualitative data in evaluating minority students application files.
* Make admission and financial aid announcements simultaneously to resolve anxieties about support.
* Utilize assistantships (TA's/RA's) in making up the support package because they foster closer ties with the faculty and the department.

Preparation for Academic Life - Graduate schools should not be viewed as a "farm system" for producing minority persons for faculty positions only; for they have many varied and needed roles to play in other areas. Moreover, career choice is a function of many factors --availability of jobs, income potential, occupational status,

job security, opportunities for advancement, etc.

Acknowledging this, the fact remains that for the most part, universities are the main training ground for faculty development.

Indeed, most of the exposure that graduate students get in the world of university teaching is as teaching assistants. Dr. Jules B. LaPidus, President of the Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, in an article titled, Preparing Faculty: Graduate Education's Role, states that, "The TA experience, in the right context with the right mentor(s), can be a superb introduction to college teaching." ...He cautions, however, "in the wrong hands, it can have the opposite effects."

Likewise, a well defined, properly mentored research assistantship can offer an excellent apprenticeship to the professorial academic life.

Having minority graduate students serving as RA's provides an opportunity for them to experience scholarly research as a junior colleague. Such experiences can lead to publications and opportunities to present one's work at faculty seminars and professional meetings. And in the "publish or perish" world of academia, minority students need to be assisted with developing these skills prior to graduation. More importantly, far too many minority graduate students leave the university as ABD's (all but dissertation completed). And since many of the ABD's attribute their status to not being able to identify an acceptable dissertation topic, serving as an RA can place minority students in a position to find a suitable research area.

Finally, the RA exposure often times lays the foundation for the skills needed to write research-funding request proposals. This in turn can strengthen the student's resolve to choose an academic teaching career; since securing research dollars is paramount to the life of a major university professor.

Summary of proposed action steps that can offer exposure and enhance the desire of minorities to choose college/university teaching as a career:

* Have faculty members more involved in the academic life of minority students through advising, mentoring and encouragement to reduce the number of ABD's.

* Place greater emphasis on engaging minority students in departmental activities--seminars, committees, study/project groups--to more fully immerse them in the academic life of the faculty.
* providing teaching/research training opportunities through well defined, well mentored RA/TA opportunities.
* Encourage the scholarly output of minority students by providing opportunities for them to present and publish their work.

Recruiting and Developing The Minority Professors - Discussions with university administrators on their ability to recruit minority-group persons for faculty and/or administrative positions invariably end with a sad lament, "we would hire minority faculty and administrators if we could only find qualified applicants." My response is and has been, "you could find them if you were willing to look; and this being too difficult, then you must grow your own"--major universities have always produced talent for other such needs and desires that they deemed important.

Having fired off that response, I then concede that it is difficult to hire minority faculty members given the current low Ph.D. output of graduate schools. But, questions linger regarding sincerity of effort and/or commitment. For example, what happens to those highly qualified minority persons that are produced? Why are able minority scholars and administrators presently in the system passed over for highly selected appointments, such as major committees and academic study task forces? Why are qualified minority persons already in the system not considered for mainline administrative positions such as department head, dean, vice president or provost? Why are minority persons almost always appointed to non-academic areas such as student affairs, affirmative action, or minority group college relations?

Yes, I do concede that the numbers are small; but universities have a dual responsibility to work to correct the situation by: (1) becoming more accountable for identifying, developing, and utilizing qualified minority persons that do exist; and (2) producing more minority Ph.D.'s thus, increasing the pool of candidates that are

available for consideration.

CONCLUSION

A combination of faculty retirements and population shifts in the ethnic makeup of the United States' population will provide expanded opportunities to engage more underrepresented minority persons in higher/postsecondary education as faculty and administrators.

The extent to which this potential is realized will depend on how successful graduate schools are today in developing minority scholars.

There are no magic solutions nor is there any need to study the problem further. The time for studying the problem is long past.

What is needed, is an all-out effort by universities and their graduate programs to make full utilization of the information and recommendation contained in such reports as:

1. Minority Participation In Graduate Education: An Action Plan; The Report of the National Forum on The Status of Minority Participation in Graduate Education, Howard G. Adams and Martha M. Conley, 1986, P.O. Box 537, Notre Dame, IN 46556.
2. The Access and Success of Blacks and Hispanics in U.S. Graduate and Professional Education: A Working Paper; Gail E. Thomas, 1986, National Research Council, Office of Scientific and Engineering Personnel, 2101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20418.
3. Minority Enrollment in Graduate and Professional Schools: A Technical Assistance Handbook; Boone, Young and Associates, Inc., 551 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10176.

Through dedicated effort and sincere commitment, minority persons can be provided with the opportunity to develop their academic prowess. This would be good for the minority community, for the universities who need the talent, and for the Nation that

would benefit from the contribution these groups would make.

America can be a better tomorrow because of our action today. Let us hope that the final chapter on the full participation of minority persons is yet to be written.

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